



JULIA ROBERTS

At 25, Julia Roberts has already had her first act in the annals of Hollywood stardom. Now, after a two-year rumour-filled break, she talks to Christopher Connelly – just 24 hours before her shock wedding to Lyle Lovett – about her imminent return in *The Pelican Brief*, her idyllic Georgia childhood, and her reaction to *those* rumours . . .

do it.
again

alan Pakula (director) says that it was your idea to cast Denzel (Washington) as the investigative reporter in *The Pelican Brief*. He says you called him from Ireland.

Yeah, I did call him. We had been talking about some people

who were very different from Denzel, and I was beating my head against the wall, thinking, "Who is this guy? Who can we find?" I was talking to a friend of mine over the course of a couple of weeks, and he kept talking about Denzel, because he had just seen *Malcolm X*. And then I was talking to a girlfriend of mine, and Denzel's name came up again . . . and it was like the penny just dropped.

Did that added bump of white and African-American ever enter your mind at all?

My whole frame of mind was, "Great actor." So it just didn't occur to me, and I don't think it makes any difference in the movie. I don't think it's anything that we try to downplay or up-play or anything. Nobody cares.

And you didn't know Denzel was a journalism major in college.

I had never even met him before, and when we got together for lunch, he was everything you would imagine. He was funny, he was kind, talking about his family. You know all the things that can go wrong when you meet somebody you respect? And you just go, "I'm never meeting anyone who makes movies ever again, it's just *too disappointing*." He was right on target — great and genuine and very candid.

Was it a concern from the beginning, that you needed to beef up the male role?

Well, where Alan's brilliance came through in the script was what he did with Callahan (Roberts's character's boyfriend in the film, played by Sam Shepard) and Grantham (Washington). Especially Callahan. In the book, you didn't really get a sense of the relationship as a positive one. If this girl is so smart, and if she's so clever, and if she has so much going for her, you sort of say, "Well, why is she going out with this guy?" Um . . . (Freezes; seems to find some connection to her personal life.) There's irony there that just . . . waved over me. (Long laugh) Oh, it's early. I'm not awake enough to censor myself, so . . . Anyway, what he did with Callahan was really great. There were days when Sam would come up with an idea for a gesture, and you'd go, "Wow! Now you get it! Now you know he loves this woman." I think we developed a really nice relationship for these two people. And therefore you have more to lose. When we were doing Sam's funeral, Alan was talking to Steve (Goldblatt, the cinematographer), and Dickie Mingalone, our camera operator, was looking through the camera. I was like, "I can't hold it in any longer, I am about to pop." And Dick saw that,

FIRDOZ ZAHEDI



and he said, "Rolling! We're rolling!" and he turned on the camera. That is an unusual thing to have happen, but I so love him for that.

Since you're having so much fun, do you regret not having done this for the past two years?

No-o-o-o, not for a minute. Because who is to say I didn't have fun for the past two years?

Not me.

Just a different kind of fun: I spent lots of time with my girlfriends, got to visit with my family, travel around. And what's funny too is that it wasn't until the last six or eight months before *The Pelican Brief* that I really started to thoroughly enjoy myself.

You'd been working a lot, you were stressed out about everything that had happened . . .

Well, I wasn't as stressed out as people perceived or wanted me to be. I think that's the key: that people *wanted* me to be. 'Cause you figure after working at this clip and dealing with the things that I had to deal with, "She's got to be rattled and stressed out and strung out . . ." And I really wasn't. But people saying it and forcing it on me *was* stressing me out!

Were you still reading a lot of scripts during that time?

I go through phases where I can read ten scripts in a week, and then I go through phases where I make coffee tables with the scripts I haven't read. And when I'm in my not-reading-scripts phase, Elaine (Goldsmith, Roberts's agent) always has a keen sense of that. She can weed out what she absolutely knows there's no way in the world I'm gonna get through ten pages of —

Steel Magnolias. Yeah, it's funny. So this is my return favour. (Laughs)

Now I am a little puzzled . . . I thought the director who was attached to the movie at the time you came on board *Sleepless In Seattle* was Garry Marshall.

I don't know that he was attached. I am not good with *attached* and who is on board and all that kind of stuff.

So it wasn't any kind of dislike . . .

(Stricken) Oh God, no – are you kidding? You've never seen Garry and me alone in a room together. I just got a letter from him the other day. I love Garry Marshall! I would do anything for him. I give Garry full credit for anything that anybody likes about *Pretty Woman*. There were probably about seven movies in the footage that we shot: one good movie, and the rest bad, embarrassing, no-I-didn't-really-do-that-movie movies.

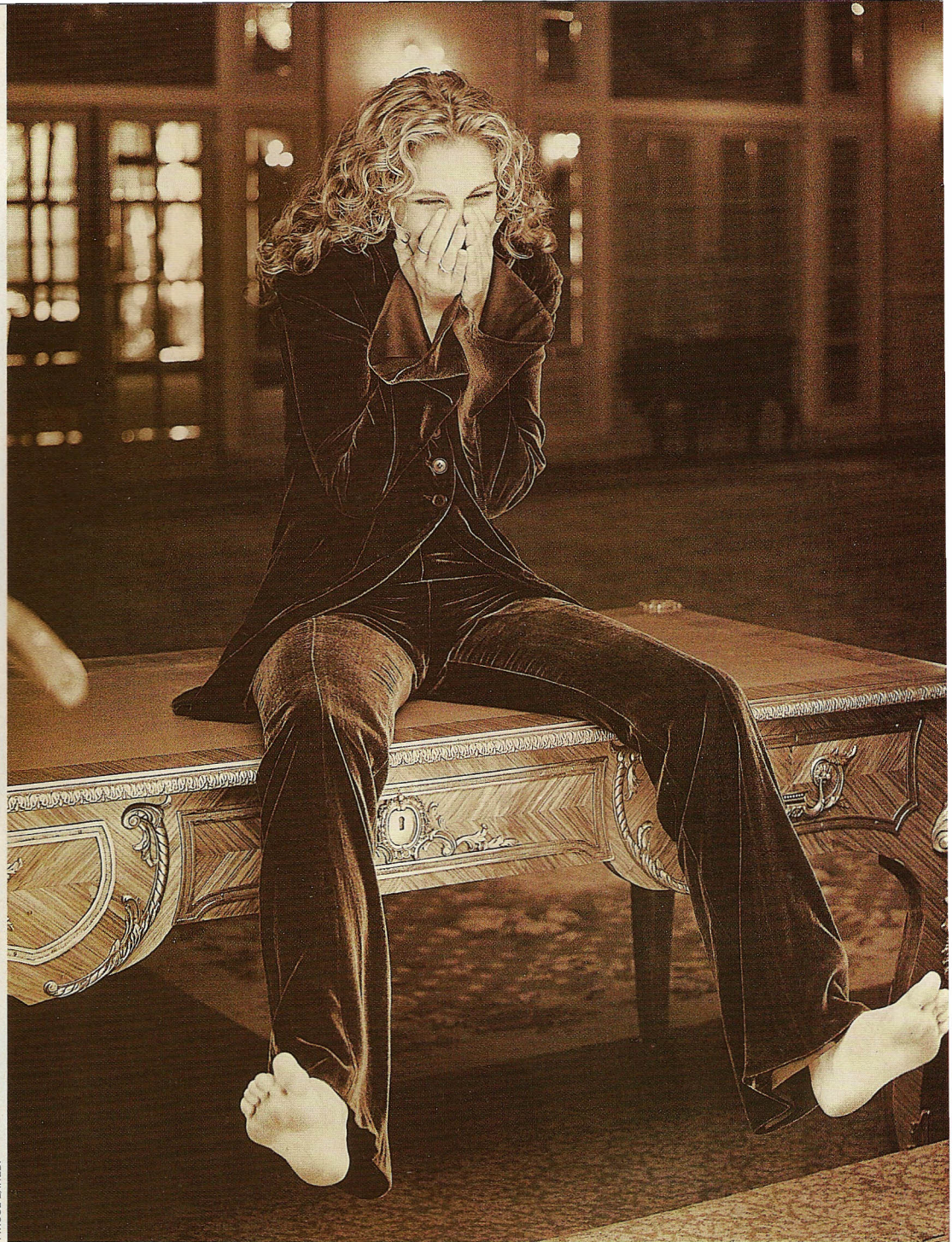
I think I remember Elaine telling a very funny story about you in a room with (then William Morris superagent) Sue Mengers, and they're asking if there's going to be nudity.

We'd been having this battle about nudity for weeks, right? And this is a big movie for me and everything, but I'm still not taking my clothes off, you know? I appreciate the job, but I'm not getting naked for you, is basically what it was coming down to. So Elaine was trying to work out the nudity clause. Elaine and I are having a heated discussion about this, and Sue Mengers comes into the office. I had never met her before. Didn't know who she was. She comes in, she sits down, and she's got that voice: "Hello, dahling, what's going on?" And Elaine's, like, "Uh, we're just having this thing," and Sue goes, "Oh, what's the big deal? We're not talking *beaver* here!" I looked at her. I thought, "Who is this woman? Why is she saying these things to me? Why is she using that word?" And then she's, like, "If I had your body, you'd see me in Gelson's going down the frozen foods aisle naked!" I think I was breaking out into hives. This woman's talking about my naked body, and . . . *Who are you?* Needless to say, I love Sue. Never at a loss for words. But boy, what a meeting. I'll never forget that for the rest of life: "Oh, we're not talking beaver." Does she not know how old I am? (Laughs)

Do you have any interest in a sequel?

I guess it's probably true that you should never say never. But my stronger inclinations say that it probably won't happen. I'm happy the way it turned out; we had a lot of fun. And I think that to re-create that, whatever *that* is, would be next to impossible. I think that Vivian and Edward found their vague idea of happily-ever-after and that everybody gets to decide for themselves, you know?

Do you regret how that movie has defined your image? That the title of the movie is used as shorthand for your name on occasion?



"I give Garry Marshall full credit for anything that anybody likes about *Pretty Woman*. There were probably seven movies in the footage we shot."

Well, it's *Pretty Woman* – how can I complain about that, okay? Let's get real. *Mediocre Girl* might have bugged me. *Pretty Woman* I can live with.

I've seen descriptions where you claim to have been the ugly duckling when you were at high school.

Yeah, ugly is perception, but I don't think I was altogether comfortable with my looks. I don't think that my looks were necessarily held

in any kind of high regard – and I also didn't really care, you know? I've never been one to go for the look. I am more a girl of comfort, but sometimes that bugs people. They think, "You're in the movies, you're supposed to look fabulous all the time. Well, you know what? I have to pick up a couple things at the market and I just throw on whatever's handy. Women come up to me in department stores and say, "That does *nothing* for your figure." Why, thank you! I'll bear that in mind next time I put



JULIA ROBERTS, JUNE 1993: "I HAVE NEVER USED DRUGS, PERIOD. THE END OF STORY. RIDICULOUS QUESTION."

"I have heard people say to friends of mine that they sat next to me at a party. I was never at the party, never saw the person and, God knows, never did the drugs."

and tells me the stuff I should look at, and I will. Speaking of two years off: she – we – had just moved to ICM when this thing sprang up where I hated everything. I didn't really hate everything, but nothing was really worth, like . . . And I have to say that she, and (ICM chief) Jeff Berg, were very supportive and very secure with my stance. There's this weird need for momentum in this business – and I believe in momentum, I think momentum is important. But there's this *nervous* momentum that goes on; people keep moving just for the sake of movement. And I can't do that. Elaine never made me feel any pressure. And it's not like she

was saying, "Whatever Julia says is right." She's the first person to say, "You are fucked in the head, you've got to do this." There was one thing we disagreed on – but ultimately she knows that it is my life, and I'm the one who has to go make the movie, and if I don't feel passionately about it, then there's no point in doing it.

And what was that movie?

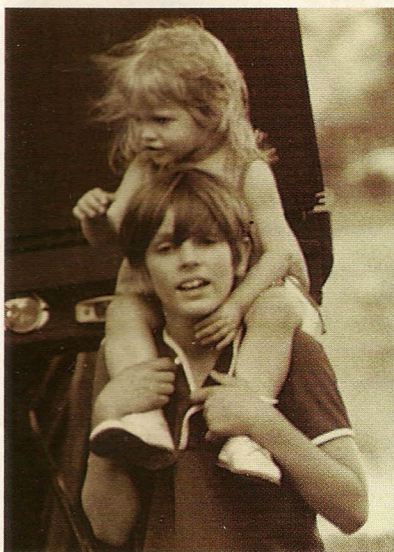
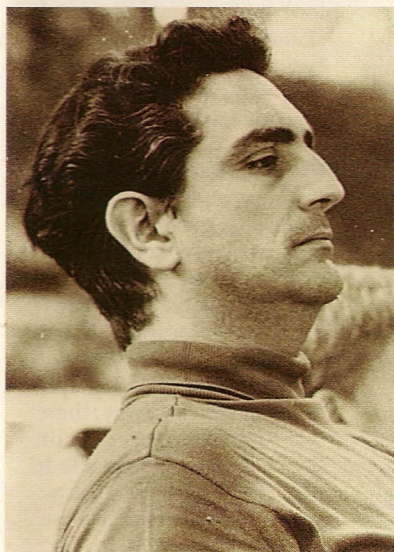
I *knew* you were going to ask me that. Um . . . I'll tell you, for two reasons: because it has a happy ending, and because I really want to see the movie. It was *Sleepless In Seattle*. Elaine

really loved it – and I loved it. But after having waited for such a long time . . . to have that be the first movie that I made didn't quite sit right with me. Part of it was the romantic comedy elements of it, and really wanting to do something different. It was nice when I heard that Meg Ryan was going to do it, because then you can say, "Oh that's good." As opposed to saying, "Oh, now, why are they going to screw it up? I don't want to be in it, but why do they just have to piss it all away?"

Your and Meg's careers interweave, don't they? She dropped out of . . .



THE JULIA ROBERTS COLLECTION, 1969: TOP: THE ROBERTS CLAN, WITH 20-MONTH-OLD JULIA AT HER FATHER'S KNEE. LEFT: WALTER "ROB" ROBERTS, FATHER OF JULIA AND "THE COOLEST WHITE MAN IN GEORGIA". BELOW, LEFT: OLDER BROTHER ERIC LIFTS BABY JULIA ON TO HIS SHOULDERS. BELOW: "I WAS SO ATTRACTIVE AS A CHILD," JOKES JULIA NOW.



would be annoyed with me, talking about her love life. Here I am, saying, "Leave my personal life alone," and I'm spewing my mom and dad all over the place for PREMIERE! No, I think it was probably a really great love for them, and they were married for 18 years, and that's a long time. I think maybe when you find yourself after that long feeling defeated, you move away from that defeat. I remember that house. I went back because I remembered I knocked out my two front teeth, one in my crib and one on the front steps of that house. (Laughs) I was so attractive as a child. Anyway, I just remember this big thing of stairs, and I think I was maybe even carrying a grocery bag or something, and I fell and knocked my tooth out. And I went back . . . and it's just three steps. (Silence) It was overwhelming. I stood there looking at it and thinking, Could they have taken them away? Three steps.

Did you remain close to your father after the family split up?

Oh sure . . . I mean . . . I was four . . . but yeah. He died when I was nine, so I think we took a fair go at it and we had a good run.

He sent you a letter that you keep to this day?

Uh-huh. I actually found some more. I think I have four now, and they are funny. I read his letters and reflect back on conversations that we had . . . and he was always interesting and interested in what you were saying.

Was he ill for a long time before he died?

Not terribly long, I think. It was a matter of a few months.

Did it embitter you?

I don't know. I guess my life would be completely different if I had a dad. And I miss my father and I would give anything to have him here, but I also like my life and I'm happy with my life. This way, we got away with the relationship where we never had a fight, he never let me down, he never didn't show up for something that I was doing, never forgot my birthday. It worked out the way it did . . . which I guess — since it's the way it is — is perfect.

So why did you bolt for New York right after high school? Your mother probably wanted you to go to college.

I think my mother has a greater foot in reality than that. I probably read more, wrote more and educated myself more the first year I was out of high school than I did the whole four years I was there. So she was fine with my decision, and I was certainly a little hell-bent for leather. My sister lived up there. I moved in with her, and we had a really nice time.

Do you have fond memories of that first year in New York? Where were you working?

I had a couple of different jobs. I worked at this Italian ice place down in the Village, and it was horrible because I can't make egg creams, and that's all anybody wanted. Egg creams. Egg

it on! I guess they just want to help. Maybe they think you don't *know* you look terrible.

I've been spending a few days talking to people who worked with your parents (at the Actor's and Writer's Workshop in Atlanta).

Somebody who had gone to my parents' school brought this the other day. (*Takes out a booklet of black-and-white pictures.*) I was, like, "Hey, that's me." I was flabbergasted, because most of those pictures I'd never seen before — and there were a couple of pictures of my dad that I'd never seen, so that was really nice.

Your father was the coolest white guy in Georgia, wasn't he?

Yeah, he was great. He was a great dad, and I think that my experience of him as a dad was as only one of many children whom he treated in that respect. Not that I wasn't treated special, as was my sister, because I think he spoiled us in a very productive way. But he was very paternal towards people and had a very gentle but commanding way about him. I just thought he was perfect. Isn't he cute? You see those pictures of him?

Everyone was saying how handsome he was.

I have some pictures of him that are just, like . . . *Hmph, forget it!* He looks so gorgeous, it's, like, *Whoo!*

Half Cherokee?

I don't think half, I think less than that. My grandma used to talk about that. I have their wedding picture — they both look *terrified*. They look like babies, first of all. My dad, he's so skinny, my mom just looks so beautiful, but they both look really scared and it's so cute!

I was talking to one guy who said that if you weren't into football, there was no place to go in all of Georgia, and "this big house really saved our lives".

I think if you truly love something, you want to share it. So my parents bringing all these children into their house and putting on these plays was because they loved what they were doing: they loved to act, my father loved to write. And so why not share with everybody?

What made him so charismatic?

When you are a little girl, you don't think, "Jeez, he's got charisma." But you know that he's got *something*. We would paint with watercolours, and he would draw these great pictures. He drew this one picture of the cast of *The Wizard Of Oz* — there is the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, Dorothy, the Lion . . . and Frosty the Snowman. (*Laughs*) At the bottom he wrote, "We are going to the land of Oz, Frosty — would you like to come along?" *Hello? Frosty?* Everything had its own bend on it.

It must have been . . . well, divorce in any family traumatic, but losing this wonderful theatre and that house must have been difficult for your folks.

I think it was. It is speculating, and my mom ▸

In Love With Lyle

Having married Lyle Lovett the day after her interview, Julia Roberts now reveals all — some weeks later — to Christopher Connelly . . .

We talked the day before your nuptials. What was going through your mind? You seemed completely serene.

I think I was trying to maintain my composure (*laughs*) because I was really giddy. But beyond that, it was really serene. I was really happy and excited and anxious. I wanted to get to Indiana.

How much earlier had you decided to do it?

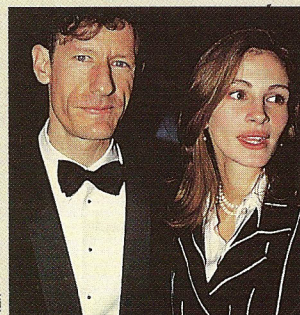
We had planned on getting married, but it wasn't until late Thursday — maybe not even until Friday — that we *actually* decided that we could get married that weekend.

The thinking being, you could pull it off and not have the world know?

Exactly. That was the thing. We'd planned to get married *sometime* . . . and then I got — I guess, *panicked*. I started thinking, I want this to be the way that I'm imagining it now; two months from now, or six months from now, we might not be able to achieve that. So I called my oh-so-composed fiancé and explained how I was feeling: "So what do you think about maybe getting married this weekend?" And he said — as only a perfect gentleman can say — "Whatever you want, honey." (*Laughs*)

He seems rather the unflappable type. True?

He's like the universe god. One with things, you know? I guess, yeah, unflappable — but it's not like he's a man without extreme feelings. I think it's quite obvious in his music that he's very emotional and has a really interesting take on things. At the same time, there's a fluidity to him that is



MR. & MRS. LOVETT: "HE'S LIKE THE UNIVERSE GOD"

nothing short of refreshing, if not just . . . staggering. (*Laughs*)

Is that what made you confident enough to marry him despite not knowing him that long?

Well, that was part of it, 'cause that's a huge part of him. But I think that anybody who spent five minutes in his presence would understand exactly why.

How has it changed your life to this point?

I feel liberated, in a way. I feel like this really pleasant calm has descended on my life . . . It has to do with recognising your own ability to make a perfectly correct decision. I think that's quite a feat: to look at something you've done and say, "This is completely right." Every time I talk to him, or every time I look at his picture or listen to his music or think about him, I think, Wow, I'm so . . . I'm so *smart* (*Laughs*) I'm so *lucky!*

What was the single most thrilling moment in getting married?

I don't know. I thought that I would be, like, the nervous bride. But I was with my girlfriends, and they were helping me and it was thoroughly enjoyable. It was like a great *event*, the way

that someone who's never been to the Oscars would imagine it to be.

How did you pick the dress?

It's funny — Lyle had bought me this particular dress that I wore as my wedding dress. He sent it to me as a present when I was on location. When we originally decided to get married, I was talking to this girlfriend of mine who was doing wardrobe, and she was going to help me make my wedding dress. Then when it came down so fast and furious, I was just looking for anything white! (*Laughs*) And I fortunately had this beautiful white dress that he'd given me that I'd never worn before.

Did anyone see this coming?

I think the people who saw it coming were the people who spent any time around us. One moment that stands out in my mind is: the day I left to go to Indiana, I had to go by the set of *The Pelican Brief* to pick something up. As I was driving away, there was a handful of my boys on the back of the grip truck. It just happened to be the few who I was particularly close to. So as I drove by, I shouted out, "Wish me luck, boys!" And they all said, "Good luck!" I don't think they were at all surprised.

Are you going to have a honeymoon?

It's like we're on a perpetual honeymoon, especially when we have to spend five or seven days apart. Because then it starts all over again. He opens the door and I go, (*gasp*) "Oh my god." (*Laughs*) How many wives are lucky enough to say that every time their husband opens the door, their heart skips a beat? . . .



ON LOCATION WITH THE PELICAN BRIEF: "I'VE NEVER BEEN ONE TO GO FOR THE LOOK. I'M MORE A GIRL OF COMFORT."



JULIA ROBERTS AND DENZEL WASHINGTON IN THE PELICAN BRIEF: "HE WAS FUNNY, HE WAS KIND, TALKING ABOUT HIS FAMILY."

and cream. Even the thought of those two words together makes me want to vomit. Seltzer water and chocolate? It's, like, "Ugh, I can't even believe I have to do this!" I think that the job that I had longest was at the Athlete's Foot on 72nd and Broadway. Next to Gray's Papaya, where you can get lunch for a dollar. And didn't I!

That's right. Large orange drink.

That was a fun job. I worked with a bunch of guys there who were fun and peppy and sold shoes. We were right next to Popeyes chicken – and I gotta tell you, doing inventory in the basement, side by side with Popeyes chicken . . . it was purgatory, that's what it was. You were caught between the real world with fresh air and Popeyes chicken. (Laughs).

You made a lot of friends with all the meetings you took after *Mystic Pizza*. Did you know you were good in those?

I think I disappointed a lot of people. (Laughs) Especially in Rome. Boy, did I disappoint people in Rome. I did this big press conference for *Mystic Pizza*. They expected this dark-haired,

buxom chickadee to come walking in, and at that point I was really skinny. I sit down on the sofa, and they're all there, looking at the assistant of the girl that they're waiting for, you know? When I finally said, "So, anybody want to ask me anything?" – I mean, faces *dropped*. It was not good for the confidence level, I'll tell you that.

Herbert Ross had you lose weight for *Steel Magnolias*, because you were playing somebody sick, right?

Actually, when I did *Steel Magnolias* I had just been terribly sick.

You'd been in the hospital for . . .

Well, I do things in a big way. I don't get colds; I go into the hospital. I had meningitis right before I did *Steel Magnolias*.

Touch and go for a while, or is that just Hollywood mythmaking?

No, it was a little tricky there. Had the little Roberto Duran bob-and-weave out of the jaws of death. I was so sick, I couldn't get better, you know? I was lying in bed, growing

paler by the day. Now, Herbert Ross. Let's just take a moment and talk about Herbert Ross, because I just read an article in a magazine (*Movieline*) where Herbert gave me a tongue-lashing beyond comprehension. If there's anyone who I've gone out of my way to be diplomatic about, it's Herbert Ross, because I don't play that game. Have I been asked by friends or peers who were thinking about working with him, or heard some horrible story, "Is that true?" I don't lie to people. Someone asks me if he was hard on me. Yes is the answer. But I have certainly never said anything bad about him in the press. He goes on to say that in my lack of technique, he found it very difficult – was hard on me – because I did not understand subtext and could only play joyful and sunny. This I completely disagree with. Do I have no technique? I have my *own* technique. I don't know what it is. It's not anything that you're going to read in a book. He made it sound like he was *forced* to hire me. He went out of his way to talk about the people he wanted over me like I was shoved down his throat. I was very young and had just come from being very sick. He was mean, and he was out of line, in my opinion. Now he rationalises it that he was trying to get a performance out of me that he felt I did not possess. This is probably something that we'll always disagree about. Fine. I don't give a shit. But if he thinks that he can talk about me in such a condescending way and not have me say something about it . . . then he's nuts. He said, "I remember saying to

"Women come up to me in department stores and say, 'That does nothing for your figure.' Why, thank you! I'll bear that in mind next time I put it on!"

Julia once, 'When this movie is over, are you going to take acting classes?' And she said, 'Why should I?' He said it as if I'm a fool. And I think at this point – 25 years old, sitting here, talking to you about this movie, about Alan Pakula, Denzel Washington – that his repeating that statement makes *him* look like a fucking fool, you know? So, Herbert, wish you well. Leave me alone.

Do you regret having done *Hook*?

Oh, I don't regret anything! What's the point of that? A friend of mine always says, 'Worries, many; regrets, none.' And it wasn't the hellish experience that everybody made it out to be. We actually had some fun on that set. There's a lot of fiction that surrounds the making of that movie in regard to me that makes it seem like it was a lot worse than it really was.

Do you wish you had left it on better terms with Steven (Spielberg), though?

I didn't leave it on bad terms with Steven. We hugged and kissed, and did the whole goodbye

drug addict. I have heard people say to friends of mine that they sat next to me at a party while all this stuff was going on. I was never at the party, never saw the person, and, God knows, never did the drugs. So that's about how much truth we are dealing with here. I'll tell you right now: accuse me of anything, but if I'm going to be punished for something, at least let me enjoy doing it, you know? If you're going to tell me that I robbed a bank – well, I better have the fucking dough under my mattress to take the shit for it.

Do you think there are people in the industry who consciously set out to spread these rumours?

Yes, I do.

Do you think you know who they are?

Yes I do.

Who are they?

They know who they are, and I know who they are, and they are not even worth dignifying by letting them see their names in print.

Did you threaten them with legal action?

Well, I confronted them in the way that one does in these coy little games of Hollywood. I think that the best thing I can do is to invalidate them by not even giving a shit. By only being upset for my particular reason, as opposed to the reason that they are hoping will upset me: that it unbalances my career and that people will start to be wary of me. That's not going to happen. Anybody who sits in a room with me for 20 minutes knows I am clear, I am focused, and I do my work. It is just a load of hooley.

So why is doing what you do fun for you?

Because you get to be everybody. I'm 25, I've been a pizza waitress, I've been a prostitute, I've died, and I've died and come back, and who can say that, at the age of 25? It's this big-scale game of pretend. It is enjoyable to get to know the ins and outs of other personalities and psychoses and problems, and it is fascinating to have to live inside someone else's head for three months and try to figure out why they do this or say this and at times integrate your own experiences. And also this real communal feeling, this band of gypsies that comes together and sneaks around in the night, making movies. I wouldn't want to do anything else – and quite frankly, I am not trained to do anything else. I have no other skill. I am a half-assed typist, that's about it. (Laughs) It's like you come to a movie set sort of incomplete: you've left everything behind but a few books and a couple of pairs of pants, and you come and you say, 'Okay, I have nothing.' And they say, 'Oh, I have nothing! I just left behind my family, my car...' So you say, 'Well, let's all stay together and then we'll have something.' It's nice to complete each other for a while and be this big, extended Waltons family. And then when it's over, you cry and you hug... and you fade to black.

The Films Of



MYSTIC PIZZA (1988)

After a small role in *Blood Red* – starring her brother Eric and not released until 1990 – and *Satisfaction*, a dud made-for-cable TV movie, Julia Roberts finally gets her major-league break here as the sexy, rebellious one in a trio of smalltown Connecticut pizzeria waitresses – sensitive Annabeth Gish and spunky Lili Taylor are the others – coming of age. A slight but appealing girlies' picture, in which the flaunted-to-advantage Roberts legs and auburn mane snared the Ivy League boy and simultaneously created the Julia buzz. And a star, undeniably, was born.



SLEEPING WITH THE ENEMY (1991)

Roberts was still flying high enough post-*Pretty Woman* to pull audiences into this poor, suspense-free, at times unintentionally hilarious tale of a battered young wife on the run from her sadistic nutter husband (Patrick Bergin in wooden psychotic gear). A cutesy "dressing up" sequence done to the sound of *Brown Eyed Girl* shamelessly invokes the shopping spree in *Pretty Woman* and simply underlines the extent to which the entire project is A Star Vehicle. Even so, she could have used a more charismatic new love interest than Kevin Anderson and a tad more plausibility about the whole thing.

"I don't regret anything!
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thing, in what I felt was a genuine way. How Steven decides to perceive it and relay it now is, I feel, a matter unto himself, because there is no overlap between the way he talks about it, and the way that it was.

Did you ever use drugs on that movie?

I've never used drugs, period. Period, the end, end of story, ridiculous question.

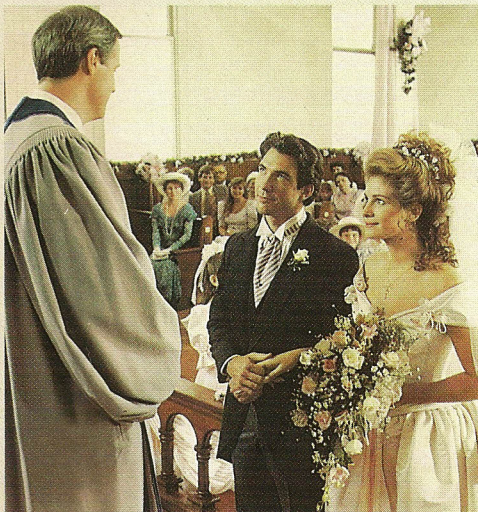
Never did cocaine, never got high?

I smoked a joint, okay. I am the girl who went through my entire high school career thinking a joint looked like a finger without skin on it. I thought that's why they would call them joints. This is how much drug experience I've had in my life! I'm the first one to say that in every rumour there's some ounce – no matter how small – of fact, some small shred. This is the only rumour about me that doesn't even have me in the right place – *nothing!* *Nothing* about it is true. But it's upsetting to me. I don't like the fact that anybody could sit in an office with my mother and think, "Oh my god, that poor woman, her daughter is just a drug addict." That makes me feel bad. My mom raised better kids than that, and she deserves to be thought of better than that, as do I. Everyone's so quick to say that I'm a role model, and I shouldn't glorify prostitution or whatever they accuse me of. And yet they're all running around, too quick to say that I'm a

KOBAL (2), MOVIESTORE COLLECTION (5)

Julia Roberts

Since making her Hollywood debuts with the little-known *Satisfaction* and *Blood Red*, Julia Roberts has made eight movies in the last five years. Angie Errigo hits the rewind button . . .



STEEL MAGNOLIAS (1989)

Herbert Ross's multiple-hanky version of the award-winning Broadway play is a slick, entertaining melodrama of Southern belles, with a nice line in sassy one-liners and a flashy female ensemble (Sally Field, Shirley MacLaine, Dolly Parton, Daryl Hannah, Olympia Dukakis). Julia here acquired an early fiancé in co-star Dylan McDermott and an Oscar nomination for her showy supporting role as Field's doomed-to-kidney failure daughter Shelby, who vows "I'd rather have half an hour of wonderful than a lifetime of average." Prestige and power in a single bound.



PRETTY WOMAN (1990)

Cold tycoon Edward (Richard Gere) mystifyingly has to pay for a companion, lights on leggy prostitute Julia, dolls her up and — hey! — you-know-what happily ever after. This tale of Cinderella reincarnated as a Hollywood Boulevard hooker took the box office by storm, thanks overwhelmingly to an enchanting Roberts, whose fresh presence as the bodacious, funny but vulnerable girl gave undeniable charm to a feelgood romantic fairy tale with a premise in fairly deplorable taste. Serious stardom and a second Oscar nomination were her immediate rewards.



FLATLINERS (1990)

Donning white coat and stethoscope, Dr. Julia and fellow medical students William Baldwin, Kevin Bacon, Oliver Platt and the new Roberts fiancé Kiefer Sutherland experiment with life-after-death states in this successful sci-fi comes to St. Elsewhere supernatural drama dished up by Joel Schumacher. The whole thing has a certain amount of flash, but the potentially intriguing notion is rather blown apart by the various dippy depictions of What Lies On The Other Side for this mainly puerile quintet of dicers with death, each with his or her own guilty secret.



DYING YOUNG (1991)

Here, Julia is the directionless young woman who takes the gig as companion to the poor little rich boy dying of leukaemia, in order to hopefully bring him some joy in his final days. Proving that even the most appealing star needs a film people faintly want to see, this flop romance tear-jerker came out with a big strike against it in the unappetising title. Yes, Julia is charming and director Joel Schumacher at least provides decent male co-stars (Campbell Scott, Vincent D'Onofrio), but this *Love Story* crossed with *Pretty Woman* yarn ultimately doesn't work, and simply sours with its unsatisfying ending.



HOOK (1991)

In the throes of cancelled wedding blues, Julia here sportingly donned Beatle wig and Spock ears as Tinkerbell in Spielberg's colourful, noisy, remarkably charmless *Peter Pan* revisited for the '90s. Robin Williams as the amnesiac, middle-aged Pan and Dustin Hoffman as the hammiest of Hooks are the principal double act, with Tink barely registering over some ingenious effects. It somehow seems, in fact, that in making her teeny, they forgot to make her dialogue barely intelligible at the same time. Time for a break and a career direction assesment.



THE PLAYER (1992)

Robert Altman and Michael Tolkin's razor-sharp satire of ruthless, paranoid studio executive Griffin Mill (Tim Robbins) and his various Hollywood power plays was a hip, hilarious triumph for all concerned. The witty basic scenario is enlivened by scores of real stars appearing as themselves, with Roberts notching up one of the biggest chuckles in a climactic cameo, teamed with Bruce Willis as the stars of the film-within-a-film. *The Player* also, of course, managed to finally provide the fiancé who actually made it all the way to the altar, country singer and occasional thespian, Mr. Lyle Lovett.